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ABSTRACT

Several events in 1987--including the publication of Ernest L. Boyer's "College: The Undergraduate Experience in America" and the second edition of the "Oregon Report"--reflect the developments in curriculum reform in journalism and mass communication education. Boyer's "enriched major" perspective (stating that general and specialized education should be viewed as contributing to common, not competing, goals) is a major step toward increasing both respect and reform in journalism and mass communication programs in the context of overall undergraduate reform. This concept provides a broad framework in which undergraduate pre-professional fields, such as mass communication, can become part of liberal education. To facilitate reform, mass communication educators need to: (1) evaluate themselves and their course offerings in light of what is fundamental and common to the field of mass communication; (2) push to include mass communication (now a major force in modern society) in the core curriculum of every university; (3) more forcefully and effectively articulate to media professionals their liberal and general education role; and (4) join with business, engineering, education, computer science, and other educators in appropriate pre-professional fields to determine points of commonality. These four steps should not only help liberate liberal education, but also help liberate journalism and mass communication programs from their peripheral role in undergraduate education and provide coherence in understanding the media. (Forty-three references are attached.) (MM)

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BEYOND THE GENERIC CURRICULUM: THE ENRICHED MAJOR FOR JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

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For journalism education to become a leading player in the modern information society, it must change. --Everett E. Dennis

The liberal and the useful arts can be brought together in the curriculum just as they inevitably must be brought together during life. --Ernest Boyer

In 1987, three rather undramatic events took place representing substantial, cumulative developments for curriculum reform in journalism and mass communication education (JMC) (See Blanchard, 1988a).

The first, and in our opinion the most significant for JMC education, was the publication of Ernest L. Boyer's College: The Undergraduate Experience in America, a Carnegie Foundation report and its "enriched major" concept which, as we will explain later in this paper, could have very positive consequences for greater understanding of and support for the role of JMC education in liberal education (Boyer, 1987).

The second event was the second edition of the "Oregon Report." (Oregon, 1987). In an epilogue, Everette E. Dennis expressed surprise that the report's first edition, the result of a project he directed, had not yet been superceded by other studies and proposals, if not more reform, throughout JMC education. Yet, he concluded, "support for reform is in the air," there being efforts at some schools to implement some of the report's proposals (Oregon, 1987, 60; see Dennis, 1988, 19).

The third event was a panel at the December ASJMC Administrators Workshop in Indianapolis reporting JMC curriculum reform efforts at DePauw, Minnesota, Oregon, Penn State and Trinity. (Christ & Blanchard, Ismach, 1988, Mabry, 1988, Ward,1988 and Winston, 1988). One of the major, perhaps serendipitous, results of these reforms is the emergence of

refreshing diversity in JMC education. Each of the five curricula reflects the distinctive culture, mission and resources of its campus. This is in contrast to, as Dennis observed in the epilogue, "most journalism schools [which]...seem as though they were formed with cookie cutters, so similar are they to one another" (Blanchard and Christ, 1988; Oregon, 1988, 61).

In general, the1984 Oregon Report had proposed that journalism and communication schools make their own programs "more holistic and more unified" or "generic," so that they stand better in the context of general liberal arts education, with "more attention to consumer courses for non-majors," making the journalism school "a more active partner, even an intellectual leader, in the university" (Oregon, 1987, 61; see Dennis, 1988).

The emerging diversity reflected in the five schools is more significant than their various degrees of "generic-ness" or integregration. Granted, a necessary prelude to rational curricular change is rigorous faculty discourse over what is common among their various subspecialities, what duplication can be eliminated, and how to most effectively integrate and structure what is essential for undergraduate education. But we believe the issue of whether a program's structure is "generic" or "sequence" is moot for at least three reasons.

First, the communications revolution will result in substantial changes in JMC curricula--with or without models, panels and studies. The sequence structure may survive in JMC schools. But it will survive like radio, daily newspapers and television networks are surviving--by developing functional alternatives (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982,41). Schools may not change curriculum formats from "sequence" to "generic" but, if they seek to be "a leading player in the modern information society (Dennis, 1988, 21), their sequences will have to change, e.g., become more integrative in some form,

in order to complete and respond to relentless changes taking place in communication.

A second and related point is that administrators with limited resources, growing national and campus pressures for reform in undergraduate education, and just plain reason are not going to tolerate much longer such duplicating specialisms such as writing for television, writing for newspapers, writing for public relations, writing for advertising or graphics for advertising, graphics for public relations, graphics for television, graphics for newspapers, or journalism law, public relations law, broadcast law or history and ethics in each subfield, to name a few.

Third, the emerging academic field of mass communication offers much potential for both the enrichment of pre-professional education and the vitality of general and liberal undergraduate education. During the past 30 years, there has been significant theoretical growth of mass communication as a field of study (Berger and Chaffee, 1987). It is just a matter of time before this resource reaches the undergraduate curriculum, pollinated by the communication Ph.D. graduates recruited to teach courses in pre-professional programs (see Blanchard, 1987). Pioneering JMC curricular reformer Jean Ward of Minnesota points out that more and more "generic" textbooks are being published in the JMC field (Ward, 1988) as Steven Chaffee predicted several years earlier:

> ...we already have the groundwork for
> interdepartmental collaboration in our universities
> and research institutes and for international collaboration
> through professional associations....Linear models of
> communication are giving way to convergence...
> formulations [are] at least [showing up] in journal articles.

Textbooks can't be far behind. (Rogers and Chaffee, 1983, 29)

Countervailing Forces: The Dilemma of JMC Education

With such compelling reasons and the wherewithal, why has change been, as Dennis says, so "measured" ? The Oregon Report and discourse resulting from it have thoroughly reviewed many of the contemporary problems of JMC education. We draw on those sources and others to highlight what we believe are the more significant forces restraining necessary reforms. And we briefly address some which have not been explicitly recognized by these sources. Then we will turn to the Carnegie Foundation report (Boyer, 1987) which holds promise for solutions to the dilemma of JMC education. Finally, we will propose a four-point agenda for JMC education to liberate itself and liberal education.

During the past 20 years, as the 1984 Orgeon Study in 1984 (Oregon, 1987) and Dennis more recently (Dennis, 1988) have documented, undergraduate mass communication programs have become overspecialized and overenrolled. As a result, many of these programs are viewed as competing with, rather than contributing to, the liberal education of students (Carey, 1978). Undergraduate students have been flocking to these programs across the country which, for better or worse, have been serving the entry-level personnel needs of newspapers, broadcasting stations, public relations and advertising departments and agencies, and other media and media-related industries.

Popularity and large enrollments generally have not resulted in proportionately larger faculties, facilities, equipment and other resources. In fact, the popularity of these programs has created frictions with other academic units as campus resources have declined and adequate allocation

or reallocation of resources has not been forthcoming to serve the rush of students in mass communication programs.

The response of many programs to this dilemma has been to attempt to control enrollments--that is, restrict student access--rather than consolidate their instructional resources in a more efficient manner through the development of core curricula and reduction of subspecialties. There has been little application of mass communication theory and research toward the development of rigorous, general, pre-professional education in mass communication, not linked to specific, transitory industrial modes (see Blanchard, 1988, and Christ & Blanchard, in press; Dennis, 1988).

Far more serious to the future of journalism and mass communication education is the lack of course offerings in mass communication "consumer" subjects--that is, mass media and society courses which could and should be part of the general education undergraduate curricula of colleges and universities. There has been little use of the rich intellectual content of the field in undergraduate liberal and general education for non-major, media consumer courses.

The curricula of most programs don't even relate to "the real world." Curricular sequences designed to meet current industry needs in advertising, broadcasting, community journalism, public relations and many other specialisms now are being rendered inadequate by the communications revolution; such developments as integration of media ownership, convergence of communication technologies, government deregulation, and fragmentation of audiences that are dramatically changing occupational and career patterns.

Moreover, voices within and outside the academy are calling for greater integration of undergraduate curricula, with more unity of

knowledge and emphasis on liberal and general education (Boyer, 1987, Bloom, 1987). As competition for limited campus resources becomes keener , mass communication programs often are justifiably viewed as either contrary or unresponsive to such calls for reform (Carey, 1978). Support from outside media constituencies is not enough to compensate for this defensive status in the campus community (Dennis, 1986 and 1988).

Contributing to this state of affairs is the fragmented organization of most mass communication programs. On campus there are often competing, sometimes warring, departments, schools or divisions of speech, journalism, broadcasting, telecommunications, mass communctions, communication arts, communication and theater, and film and other industrial or technological, rather than intellectual, designations. Even when not overtly competing for resources and intellectual turf, separate programs related to the mass communication field by their very division tend to inhibit the development of its potential. Even umbrella schools or colleges of communication often retain old structures with departments or divisions of journalism, public relations, broadcasting, speech, advertising and other subspecialties which fragment resources.

Reinforcing that situation are outside professional associations and their vocal and influential education oversight committees which prescribe curricula and courses they believe better prepare students for specialized jobs. These media professional groups also strongly influence the criteria applied in the evaluation process of the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Further reinforcing campus fragmentation are scholarly professional associations. Some of these are the Association for Education in Journalism in Mass Communication, Broadcast Education Association, Speech

Communication Association, Film and Video Association, International Communication Association, Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication, and theAssociation of Communication Administration. All of these organizations have many very active and infuential divisions and committees reflecting a variety of industry-based of media delivery systems and teaching and research specialisms. Furthermore, many of these organizations have regional, even state, associations, meetings and conventions.

The Enriched Major

Journalism and mass communication programs need both respect and reform. A giant step toward both in the context of overall undergraduate reform is the milestone report on undergraduate education, College: The Undergraduate Experience in America by Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Boyer proposes the "enriched major" perspective as the way "general and specialized education must be viewed as contributing to common, not competing, ends on college campuses." (Boyer, 1987,102). This concept provides a broad framework in which undergraduate pre-professional fields, such as mass communication, can become part of liberal education.

We have argued before the need to recognize that mass communication can and does contribute to liberal education is a major step toward resolution of its present dilemma. (see Blanchard and Christ, 1987; Bohn, 1988; Hudson, 1988; Fletcher, 1988; McCall, 1988, and Rowland, 1988). One of the problems facing many mass communication programs has been non-recognition and non-acceptance on their campuses largely because of the newness of the field. However, since modern history was proposed as

a new field at Oxford University in the 18th Century, causing bitter debate, the history of higher education records the successive emergence of new academic disciplines--modern languages, sociology, political science, laboratory sciences--which, Boyer reminds us, once were considered too novel for the academy to embrace. Today they are considered as "liberal arts" as the classics. The continued process of emerging disciplines is seen in the Carnegie report as a positive development:

> We are encouraged by the prospect that, today, new academic alliances are being formed...New disciplines are emerging at the points where old ones are converging. (Boyer, 1987, 91)

The emergence of mass communication as an academic field--reflecting new combinations of knowledge and institutional systems and meeting new educational needs--should be viewed in the historical context of new disciplines. It is especially important that scholars and teachers in mass communication see their field in this way, both to more confidently and effectively articulate their role and to restructure their curricula accordingly.

A second argument often used against mass communication programs is that they are competitive with liberal education because they are usually designed to prepare students for careers. This is a specious argument, as Boyer points out: "All students, regardless of their major, are preparing for productive work" and "even the most traditional colleges expect their graduates to move on to careers." (Boyer, 1987, 109)

More and more thoughtful studies of the subject are recognizing professional programs can meet the criteria of liberal learning. A recent study, published in Change magazine, concluded that:

> Evidence of liberal educators' wielding

> their distinctive capability well beyond the boundaries of what we call the liberal arts and sciences is not uncommon. There are even sound programmatic commitments in professional schools explicitly aimed at the...[liberal learning].. we have sketched. (Woditsch, et al., 1987, 57)

The issue of whether or not a given academic program is "liberal" or "useful" is moot, Boyer suggests, as long as it meets certain basic criteria:

> ...in judging the merits of a major, the issue is not the newness, or status, or even the utility of the program. Rather, the basic test...is this: Does the field of study have a legitimate intellectual content of its own and does it have the capacity to enlarge, rather than narrow, the vision of the student? (Boyer, 1987,109)

The concept of the enriched major intertwines two essential parts of the baccalaureate program--the major and general education. The enriched major should respond to three essential questions:

> What is the history and tradition of the field to be examined? What are the social and economic implications to be understood? What are the ethical and moral issues to be confronted? (Boyer, 1987, 110)

If a major is "so narrow and so technical" that it does not have historical and social implications "then the department is offering mere

technical training that belongs in a trade school, not on a college campus, where the goal is liberal learning."

We believe the dilemma of mass communication education can be resolved with the application and forceful on-campus articulation of Boyer's general criteria for the enriched major. For successfully integrated programs, these criteria can be applied to organizing compelling evidence that they are contributing to the liberal education of students and are worthy of acceptance and support. For others, the criteria can serve as guidelines for curricular revisions designed to direct mass communication programs to the mainstream of liberal education.

Affirming the University Tradition and Joining the Mainstream

What about the more ambitious part of the Oregon Report vision--that of making journalism and mass communication programs more active partners, even intellectual leaders, in their universities (Oregon, 61)? To realize this goal, JMC education must get in the mainstream, actively join in the necessary reforms of undergraduate education, become part of Boyer's "integrated core"--the common, general-education curriculum which colleges and universities are being urged, prodded, and inspired to develop. In other words, JMC education can provide intellectual leadership by demonstrating how media studies can revitalize and liberate liberal education in the 21st century.

Toward this end and by way of summarizing present reforms and focusing future objectives, a four-point approach is proposed. Each point involves some element of integration or, at least, identification of commonalities--within the JMC field, between JMC and tradition-bound disciplines, between JMC educators and their professional constituencies, and

between JMC faculty and those in other undergraduate pre-professional fields (see Blanchard and Christ, 1988).

One major, liberal, integrative objective should guide these efforts. That is reaffirming what James W. Carey and Harold Innis called the university tradition, an antidote to the narrow professionalism of our fragmenting culture and our obsession with the present. Carey in his AEJ presidential address, "A Plea for the University Tradition," (Carey, 1978) expressed

> ...concern about the professions and their attempts to capture the university, by turning its attention to practical matters, to narrow its interests in life, and make it a spokesman for professional interests. [Innis and Carey caution their] colleagues to protect the university tradition, defend it against interests and specialisms that would overwhelm it, maintain the general intellectual and moral point of view, preserve a sense of history and the future. (Keel, 1987)

Protection, like charity, should begin at home. The university tradition needs to be reflected within the university and among all of its disciplines where narrow, vocational specialisms--clearly documented by Ernest Boyer in the Carnegie Foundation report and other critiques--have evolved. As Boyer and others suggest, a discipline should not be overlooked or exempted from scrutiny because it happens to carry a "liberal arts" banner.

The Change magazine authors of "The Skillful Baccalaureate," concluded:

> We have seen Daniel Bell's distinction between liberal and specialized instructional approaches, and would readily pick a liberal Accounting 101 over a dogmatized French Renaissance 212....A careful look at liberalizing programs doing good work outside liberal arts institutions reveals that they employ much of that very tradition, often more sensitively than do many of its titled caretakers. (Woditsch, et al., 1987, 57)

At the very least, the substance, practice, outcomes, and functions offered by "the titled caretakers"--whether they be in humanities, science, arts, or social sciences--ought to undergo some rigorous liberal-spirited examination and discussion we advocate for pre-professional programs in journalism and mass communication.

The true test, at least in courage, for JMC educators in their affirmation of the the university tradition is how well they articulate university values among the off-campus practitioners, the titled caretakers of "the-real-world." Carey and Innis would have them challenge the overextention of the "real world" ethos, all in the good name of professionalism, into the academy as well as in society.

Using the university tradition as a foundation, we specifically propose four steps:

First, mass communication programs need to evaluate themselves and their course offerings in light of what is fundamental and common to the field of mass communication. Most of mass communication educators would argue in the university community that their discipline is basic, but can they explain what is basic about their discipline? Uniformity is not the goal, but a broad framework of what is common and fundamental in broadcasting,

journalism, telecommunications, film and other programs with similar designations would be a step toward more coordination and cooperation among competing programs on the same campuses.

As part of this evaluation process, mass communication educators should critically view their curriculum for excessive dominance of and reliance upon narrow professional values. And the Boyer criteria should be applied: What is the legitimate intellectual content of the field? In what ways does it have the capacity to enlarge, rather than narrow, the vision the student? What is the history and tradition of the field to be examined? How and where in the curriculum are the social and economic implications and the ethical and moral issues explored?

Second, it can and should be argued that mass communication systems are major forces in modern society and no liberal or general education is complete without some study and understanding of the media (McCall, 1988). Including mass communication within the common, core or general education curriculum of every college and university in the United States should be a major goal of mass communication educators. This does not mean merely including some mass communication courses in a university menu of distribution requirements. The current reform in higher education points toward more intergration and consolidation of all of the fragmented academic disciplines at the undergraduate level; or, at least, a highly integrated curriculum which all undergraduate students share in common. A liberating education can be achieved by meaningful integration and unity of appropriate components of knowledge which are both contemporary and traditional, and both conceptual and applied, regardless of which academic department it happens to be housed. In that context, the field of mass communication has much to offer and educators in the field should be

prepared to articulate just how and why mass communication should be included in general education curricula.

Third, mass communication educators need to more forcefully and effectively articulate to media professionals their liberal and general education role . They can do this without rejecting their important pre-professional roles in preparing students for careers in mass communication. Spokespersons for mass media institutions and professional associations should be asked to join educators in considering those elements in the professional fields that can enlighten and enliven liberal education (see Jankowski, 1986 and Sitton, 1986). They also should be consulted on how to insure that mass communication students achieve a liberal education while pursuing their pre-professional studies.

Fourth, mass communication educators should join with the business, engineering, education, computer science, and other educators in appropriate pre-professional fields to determine points of commonality. The University of Michigan Professional Preparation survey has shown remarkable agreement among faculty and administrators in architecture, business, education, engineering, journalism, nursing, pharmacy, and social work on such issues as educational goals, institutional approaches, and criteria for measuring liberal education outcomes in students. (Stark and Lowther, 1986), As pre-professional educators learn more about each other, they will be able to articulate their functions in liberal education and better advise students about the best ways of achieving liberal education objectives.

Recognizing in the academy "that mass communication is central to society itself and the study of mass communication should be central to the university as well" (Oregon, 1987, 61), these four steps should not only help

liberate liberal education. They should help liberate journalism and mass communication programs from their peripheral role in undergraduate education and help provide coherence in understanding the media.

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